

# 2nd Annual Conference

# **SUMMARY**

# "Product Development and Marketing for Senior Tourism in Remote EU Regions"



May 21, 2013 Burgas, Bulgaria



# Organized by

Burgas Regional Tourist Association (Bulgaria) brta@abv.bg

We thank all of the speakers, moderators and interpreters for their excellent, informative and investigatory presentations and contributions to the event.

All the presentations are available online at the TOURAGE Site at: www.tourage.eu

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# OPENING PLENARY SESSION SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS

moderated by Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova, PhD, Tourism Department, Sofia University (Bulgaria)

All present were greeted by Mr.Ivo Marinov, Deputy Minister of Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism in Bulgaria, also Mr.Konstantin Grebenarov, Governor of Burgas District and Ms.Yordanka Ananieva, Deputy Mayor of Burgas Municipality.



*Mr. Konstantin Grebenarov, Governor of Burgas District* opened the 2nd Annual Conference of TOURAGE Project and stated Project important for the development of senior tourism. In his speech he stressed the value of archeology, legends and history which senior tourists find very interesting.

Mr. Grebenarov also stressed cooperation of municipalities as key factor for success to develop tourism in the region. Municipality has a great role financially supporting tourism development, e.g. renovating cultural heritage.



Ms. Yordanka Ananieva, Deputy Mayor of Burgas Municipality emphasised the

importance of experience exchange to benefit from each other and to improve tourism.

Ms. Ananieva introduced good practices in Burgas region regarding senior tourism, as during the last 5 years Burgas has worked to develop facilities making the region a tourism destination. The most important things that attract tourists are good infrastructure and good transport system. For the last 2 years the region

has successfully been the best place to live in Bulgaria. Project applications are evaluated much better since all municipalities in the region cooperate to work together – it is a successful method to develop tourism.

"Sharing ideas in the European Union is for free, and even then there is possibility to remain unique."

-Ms.Yordanka Ananieva



Mr. Ivo Marinov, Deputy Minister of Bulgaria Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism stressed opportunities of tourism in Bulgaria, as the country has four seasons and rich diversity of tourism activities to offer.

In his speech Mr. Marinov declared that Bulgaria attracts 7 million tourists per year, including seniors, because of linking different kinds of tourism offers, not just sunbathing in the beach or only historical heritage sightseeing.









"Introduction of the TOURAGE Project" by Ms. Ulla Äänismaa, Project Manager, Regional Council of North Karelia (Finland)

Ms. Äänismaa, Project manager and the representative of the Regional Council of North Karelia, Finland, introduced the TOURAGE project and gave an overview of its objectives, activities and expected results. Ms. Äänismaa pointed out some important reasons behind the development of the project: demographic change which many regions are facing currently or in the near future was one of the most important one as it calls for new solutions to services on many fields of life such as education, training and healthcare. Also tourism services are one of them. By

focusing on the possibilities demographic change can also open doors to many new kinds of innovations and entrepreneurship.

Ms. Äänismaa described the characteristics of +55 tourists – they are wealthy, healthy, have time and spend money on services. But it is not heterogeneous group and it is important to remember that there are also persons with disabilities, health problems and other disadvantages. It is important to find out the need and expectations of the senior tourist to be able to develop right products and services for different kind of needs.

The presentation by Ms. Ulla Äänismaa can be downloaded here



"Types of subsidized tourism and recreation in Bulgaria" by Prof. Vasil Marinov, PhD, Head of Tourism department in Sofia University (Bulgaria)

Prof. Marinov pointed that it is not enough that people want to travel, there should also be a possibility for them to travel. He indicated that there are many differences between countries regarding group characteristics, also regarding traveling habits. Furthermore, Prof. Marinov presented the history of subsidized tourism in Bulgaria. System which allowed people to go for subsidized holidays collapsed during 1990s because of political and economic changes. The main service provider serves 60 thousand people per year and offers also 2 specific programmes

for seniors. Later Prof. Marinov informed about other grant programmes targeted for elderly people with disabilities and people living alone.









"Tourism planning and policy development in North Karelia" by Mr. Pekka Huovinen, Development manager, Regional Council of North Karelia (Finland)

Mr. Huovinen informed that the population is decreasing and aging in the northern and southern parts of North Karelia, whereas the population increases and is younger in the Joensuu sub-region. Furthermore, Mr. Huovinen informed about the regional development planning system which is combination of the European, National, regional and local development strategies and programmes and it is prepared in wide cooperation with the regional stakeholders. The North Karelia Regional Development Programme, POKAT 2014, states that tourism is one of the core branches the region invests in. Programme will be updated during 2013 which

will give a good opportunity to focus also on the lessons learned through the TOURAGE project. Read more about the POKAT 2014 programme <a href="here">here</a>

The region has started to transfer a good practice related to senior tourism that was identified in Ireland: marketing tourism products for +55 travelers. With the help of the regional tourist service Karelia Expert Tourism Service ltd. and a well-known brand VisitKarelia.fi, the project will launch a marketing tool that contains information on the region's tourism packages, destinations and services that could be interesting for the +55 tourists.

The presentation by Mr. Pekka Huovinen can be downloaded <u>here</u>



"STEEP – Social Tourism European Exchanges Platform" by Mr. Danny Silva, Project manager, International Social Tourism Organization OITS-ISTO

Mr. Silva presented a platform created during the STEEP project. He pointed out

that social tourism is understood differently in different countries, so the concept differs depending of partners in the project. Calypso seeks to support young adults, families facing difficulties, people with disabilities, seniors and pensioners through the platform. (More about platform you can read here)

Mr. Silva stated that there is also a possibility

to integrate good practices, even from TOURAGE project into the STEEP platform. By being a partner of the platform, it is possible to



access different kinds of information. The platform allows the user to create different travel packages for different target groups.

The presentation by Mr. Danny Silva can be downloaded here









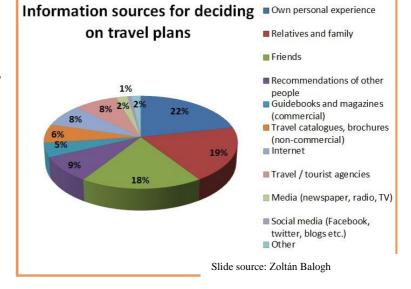
"Questionnaire for local seniors on tourism: what are the need of users in TOURAGE regions?" by Mr. Zoltán Balogh, Észak-Alföld Regional Development Agency (Hungary)

The data for the TOURAGE survey on senior travelers' needs and habits was collected in all partner regions of the TOURAGE project and 1372 questionnaires were analysed.

#### **Some of results:**

- Seniors do not typically use digital resources when searching for information about travel destinations. This can, however, change in the future
- Travelling by car or bus dominates (instead of cheap flights)
- Like to travel together with families or friends
- Motivation NOT to travel: lack of time, financial resources or health problems
- High quality services and safety issue are important
- Heavy physical activities are not popular
- Mostly nature and historical heritage attract seniors
- As senior tourists like nature, beach tourism has high potential

The presentation by Mr. Zoltán Balogh can be downloaded <u>here</u>















# PARALLEL THEMATIC SESSIONS 1st Session "Marketing for Senior Tourism"

moderated by Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova, PhD, Tourism Department, Sofia University (Bulgaria)

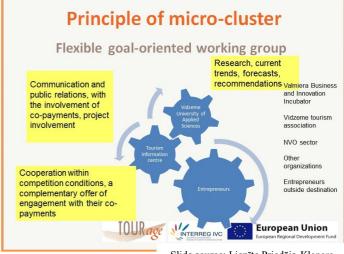


"Managing of senior tourism on local destination level" by Mrs. Lienīte Priedāja-Klepere, Tourism Advisory board of Valmiera and its surroundings, Vidzeme Planning Region (Latvia)

Tourism advisory board of Valmiera and its surrounding consists of Valmiera city and 3 small municipalities, which are linked functionally to provide tourism. Advisory board was established realizing that it is good to work together and not separately. Tourism advisory board is a model of strategic partnership of all

stakeholders, many entrepreneurs are involved. The aim of this board is more

essential for active cooperation rather than informative movement. Works as a micro cluster, which means it is a flexible goal-oriented working group. Micro-cluster consists of Vidzeme university of applied sciences, tourism information centre and local entrepreneurs. Together all stakeholders have made a tourism strategy, which takes also seniors into account. While doing the research about tourists` needs, several senior organizations and their members were analyzed. Few results from the survey -seniors in Vidzeme region travel a lot, combines routes by themselves.



Slide source: Lienīte Priedāja-Klepere

The presentation by Lienīte Priedāja-Klepere can be downloaded here















"The role of region and city marketing to strengthen the identity and to increase the tourism activity of senior population in Észak-Alföld region" by Dr. Zoltán Szakál, tourism and marketing expert, Szabolcs – Szatmár-Bereg County Regional Development and Environmental Management Agency Nonprofit Ltd. (Hungary)

Dr. Szakál informs about people's attitude to region and station marketing in Hungary and in the Észak-Alföld region. Many stakeholders are involved in regional tourism marketing communications. By paying attention to seniors, it means that community wants to experience changes, wants to socialize, integrate all groups.

Later Dr. Szakál presents the profile of a Hungarian senior tourist- their medical and financial conditions are bad. They do not leave the country, they travel locally,

seniors are strongly affected by traditions, travels with family, do not speak foreign languages. Senior tourists are more interested in medical tourism, visiting festivals, also religion.

The presentation by Dr. Zoltán Szakál can be downloaded <u>here</u>



"Promotion of medical tourism in Harkany micro region" by Mr. Balázs Ferenczi, expert of Harkany Tourism Association (HTA), Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency (Hungary)

HTA was founded in 2005 with 23 members. It provides professional support for the development of tourism in Harkany. Town council, hospital, thermal spa and town councils of surrounding municipalities work together in Tourism destination management organization. HTA funded destination development, as well as opened tourism information office, web site, publications etc., thus inventing all tools for marketing management. Funding amount year by year increases, so it let for example to develop SPA and pool game offers, built child care building,

establish the tourist card.

In the region the main stress is on the medical tourism, as Harkany has 200 years old medical history. Now it is internationally known spa town, which works directly for tourism. It is important to mix programmes and treatments, because tourists can feel tired of busy rehabilitation Schedule. So it is good to offer also sightseeing tours or active activities while having rehabilitation procedures. Nordic walking, hiking, jogging, boot trips, also food testing, all these activities are popular among local.

boat trips, also food tasting- all these activities are popular among local seniors and senior tourists.

The presentation by Mr. Balázs Ferenczi can be downloaded <u>here</u>



Slide source: Balazs Ferenczi









"Tourist activities of seniors from Podkarpackie region" by Mr. Łuksza Stokłosa, University of Information, Technology and Management in Rzeszów, Podkarpackie region (Poland)

Mr. Stoklosa presented research which was aimed to determine levels of activities for seniors.

## **Results:**

- Normally seniors spend 8-10 days when travelling; less days if senior still works and longer if person is retired.
- Older people like to stay and travel around their home country;
- Working seniors like to travel in summer; for others no big difference;
- 46% prefer to travel around the country; rest regionally or even abroad.
- Mainly organize trips individually; sometimes ask help for tourism agencies;
- Mostly rely on their experience, also on experience of their family, friends;
- Internet and social media do not work for them
- Mostly use car for travelling;
- Travel together with partners, even alone;
- Obstacles for traveling: lack of time, financial reasons or health problems;
- Main reason to go somewhere is to rest in peace and spend some time with family, sometimes to find new friends.
- Choice of destination depends on natural and cultural assets, security, quality of service, how easy it is to arrive to the destination;

The presentation by Mr. Łuksza Stokłosa can be downloaded <a href="here">here</a>



















"Senior Tourism in Region of East Macedonia & Thrace" by Mr. Pavlos Damianidis, Deputy Regional Governor, Region of East Macedonia & Thrace (Greece)

The region of East Macedonia & Thrace is interested in demanding and competitive tourism based economy. Mr. Damianidis states that new process of tourism

development should take place in the region – quality and individualized services should play the main role. He noted that the heritage of the Neebor project is alive and has gathered regions to work with new challenges and topics focusing on the new,

innovative solutions for senior tourists. They have their habits, needs and goals which are often similar to other tourists. Big events, for example festivals attract seniors and also nature has high potential to attract older tourists. Important and main challenge is to set quality model as tourists are increasingly demanding, and it is one of main factor to compete with other tourism providers.

"Experience transfer and cluster cooperation is important to develop successful tourism in the regions."

-Mr.Pavlos Damianidis

Tourism development should be politically settled to work successfully, European Union funds should be successfully used to develop tourism.

The presentation by Mr.Pavlos Damianidis can be downloaded here









# PARALLEL THEMATIC SESSIONS 2nd Session "Product Development for Senior Tourism"

moderated by Assist. Prof. Elka Dogramadijieva, PhD, Tourism Department, Sofia University (Bulgaria)



"Windows cave in Piñar (Granada), a good example of adapted touristic attraction barrier free in rural areas" by Mrs. Myriam Prieto, County council of Granada (Spain)

Mrs. Prieto presented an adapted tourist attraction called Windows Cave which is located in the village of Piñar in Granada, Spain. The cave is a good example of an attraction that has been made barrier-free and accessible in order to accommodate for the needs of senior tourists and disabled people. The cave that is open for tourists around the year is the only accessible cave in Spain. Accessible pathways have been made inside

the cave and there are secure walkways with railings inside it. Due to the acoustic properties of the cave, many concerts are organised there. Other activities, such as workshops, are organised inside and around the cave. There is a restaurant and accommodation possibilities in the vicinity and the attraction has also been used for educational purposes, such as study visits. Guided tours are offered for the tourists and a train runs from the village of Piñar to the cave. These additional activities inside and around the cave have increased the number of visitors in the attraction. This has also had an impact on the development and employment in the region.

"Additional activities inside and outside the tourism object let increase the number of visitors.

-Mrs. Myriam Prieto

The presentation by Mrs. Myriam Prieto can be downloaded here



"Accessible nature tourism in North Karelia" by Mr. Timo Ekroos, ISAK

coordinator, Centre for Innovations for Independent Living (ISAK), Karelia University of Applied Sciences, North Karelia (Finland)

Mr. Ekroos gave an overview of accessible nature tourism in North

Karelia, Finland. Accessible nature tourism refers to solutions that enable people of all ages and with mobility difficulties to access services in nature.







The solutions improve the usability and functionality of the services. Mr. Ekroos highlighted that the development process starts with a positive attitude towards accessibility.



The solutions created are often simple. Groups of seniors and people with disabilities have always been involved in the process of developing natural environments and services. This enables direct feedback from the target group. Careful planning and creativity are also in key positions when finding suitable solutions for the target group.

Accessibility is an integral part of senior tourism and it makes customers feel safe. Accessibility should be understood as a unity that consists of different parts that work well together. There is no sense of having an accessible space if it is difficult to reach (lack of ramp, for example).

The presentation by Mr. Timo Ekroos can be downloaded <u>here</u>



"Untapped Tourism Potential: Putting Age friendly at the forefront of Irish Hospitality" by Mr. Shane Winters, Age friendly planner for the West Region, West Regional Authority (Ireland)

Mr. Winters presented the Age Friendly Cities and Counties (AFC) programme which has been managed and set up by the Aging well network. The aim of the programme is to make Ireland one of the best countries in the world to grow in.

It also aims to improve the quality of life of older adults by

making sure that their voice is being heard. It is operational in 15 counties and is supported by the WHO. More about the programme you can read <u>here</u>

National initiatives are part of the AFC programme. Businesses can get an age friendly recognition if they meet older customers' needs. Businesses can attend workshops dealing with age friendly practices. Age friendly solutions, such as offers, discounts and accessible services can benefit the business.



Slide source: Shane Winters

As part of the AFC programme, a survey on the needs of older customers in restaurants has been also conducted. The AFC programme involves improving the infrastructure and physical surroundings, making sure that older people can live an independent and healthy life.

The presentation by Mr. Shane Winters can be downloaded here









"Tourism consumption of Polish seniors in the light of global tendencies in tourism – the case of the Warminsko-Marzurskie Region" by Ms. Joanna Zielińska -Szczepkowska, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic (Poland)

Ms. Zielińska-Szczepkowska described the senior tourism profile in Poland. There are two generations of seniors: the ones born between 1920 and 1940 and the post-war generation i.e. seniors born between 1940 and 1960. Pre-war generation is traditionally oriented and does not want to spend on tourism, whereas post-war generation is interested in travelling. The seniors like to plan their holidays individually and make shorter trips. The main barriers for

travelling are lack of finance, limited access to transportation and lack of interest for travelling. In general, polish senior tourists are demanding, value high quality and want to search for their roots.

In Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region there are theme villages that are suitable for senior tourism. Tourism offer for the special needs of senior tourism is relatively low in Poland. By respecting their needs and specific expectations, Poland can offer even more satisfying experiences for the target group.



The presentation by Ms. Joanna Zielińska – Szczepkowska can be downloaded here



"SOREA hotels and the State specific subsidy for retired persons in Slovak republic" by Mr. Matúš Goč, project manager, Regional Development Agency of the Prešov Self-Governing Region (Slovakia)

Ministry of labour, social affairs and family has since 1999 provided subsidies for retired people in the Slovak republic. The subsidy is for reconditioning activities and amounts to 525 000 euros per year. The subsidy is distributed to around 10 000 seniors who receive a vacation voucher which value is 50 euros. The eligible target groups are: Slovak citizens, unemployed people and recipients of retirement, early retirement or retirement pension.







The ministry declares a public competition for the state subsidy and the winners of this competition are the beneficiaries of the subsidy, usually the union of pensioners.

Another competition is announced for contractors, such as travel agencies and hotel chains like SOREA hotels, which is the largest chain of hotels in Slovakia. The subsidy covers 6 nights with full board in one of the hotels. The retired pensioners get discount and free entries to leisure activities. The subsidy programme starts in May and runs until December and one person is eligible to receive the subsidy once a year. Every year almost 100 % of the allocated amount for the subsidy is being used.

The subsidy programme has also led to the development of new products and programmes for senior tourists. The SOREA hotels have expanded their offer for seniors who are not eligible to the state subsidy. One of the latest products involves younger and older generations. It is called "Grandma, Grandpa show may Slovekie". It is an off season product offered for 155 seniors and



me Slovakia". It is an off-season product offered for +55 seniors and their grandchildren involving sightseeing, bonuses and free entries to attractions.

The presentation by Mr. Matúš Goč can be downloaded <u>here</u>



"Union of veterans Lukoil Neftohim Burgas – tourism activities for elderly people" by Ms. Radostina Novacheva, Executive Director, Union of veterans Lukoil Neftohim Burgas (Bulgaria)

The union of veterans Lukoil Neftohin Burgas is a voluntary organisation that was set up as an initiative of the oil processing plant's ex-workers. The former workers wanted to maintain their social life after retirement. Everyone who has worked for the oil processing plant has a right to be a member of the union. The

aim of the union is to organise social gatherings and to utilize the knowledge and expertise of the veterans for the needs of the organization.

Every year the union makes a plan for the activities they want to implement during the year. They organize different activities, such as excursions, anniversaries, celebrations (international women's day etc.), hiking and dancing. The union has a choir that performs in different events and also its own library. The veterans organise trips abroad where they want to see cultural and historical sites.







# **APPENDIX A – CONFERENCE PROGRAMME**



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference

# "Product Development and Marketing for Senior Tourism in Remote EU Regions"

21st May 2013

Bulgaria, Burgas

Cultural Centre "Morsko Kazino", Seaside Garden

## **DRAFT Programme**

09:30 - 10:30 Registration, coffee

## 10:30 – 13:00 Opening plenary session

Moderator - Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova. PhD, Tourism Department, Sofia University (BG)

10:30 - 10:40	Welcome speech by Mr. Konstantin Grebenarov, Governor of Burgas District (BG)
10:40 – 10:50	<b>Tourism policies in Burgas Municiaplity - speech</b> by Ms Yordanka Ananieva, Deputy Mayor of Burgas Municipality (BG)
10:50 – 11:20	<b>Keynote</b> by Mr. Ivo Marinov, Deputy Minister of Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism (BG)
11:20 – 11:30	"Introduction of the TOURAGE Project", Ms. Ulla Äänismaa, Project Manager, Regional Council of North Karelia (FI)
11:30 – 11:50	"Types of subsidized tourism and recreation in Bulgaria", Prof. Vasil Marinov, PhD - Head of Tourism Department - Sofia University (BG)
11:50 – 12:10	"Tourism planning and policy development in North Karelia", Mr. Pekka Huovinen, Development Manager, Regional Council of North Karelia (FI)
12:10 – 12:30	<b>"STEEP – Social Tourism European Exchanges Platform",</b> Mr. Danny Silva, Project Manager, International Social Tourism Organization OITS-ISTO
12:30 - 12:50	"Questionnaire for local seniors on tourism: what are the needs of users in TOURAGE regions?", Mr. Zoltán Balogh, Észak-Alföld Regional Development Agency (HU)
12:50 - 13:00	Discussion and summary of the session (moderator)

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch





## 14:00 - 15:45 Parallel thematic sessions

1 <sup>st</sup> session "Marketing for Senior Tourism"		
moderator Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova. PhD, Tourism Department, Sofia University (BG)		
14:00 - 14:15	"Managing of senior tourism on local destination level", Tourism expert	
	Mrs. Lienīte Priedāja-Klepere, Tourism advisory board of Valmiera and its	
	surroundings, Vidzeme Planning Region (LV)	
14:15 - 14:30	"The role of region and city marketing to strengthen the identity and to	
	increase the tourism activity of senior population in Észak-Alföld region",	
	Dr. Zoltán Szakál tourism and marketing expert, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	
	County Regional Development and Environmental Management Agency	
	Nonprofit Ltd. (HU)	
14:30 - 14:45	"Promotion of medical tourism in Harkány micro region", Mr. Balázs	
	Ferenczi, The expert of Harkány Tourism Association, Lake Balaton	
	Development Coordination Agency (HU)	
14:45 - 15:00	"Tourist activities of seniors from Podkarpackie region", Mr. Łuksza	
	Stokłosa from University of Information, Technology and Management in	
	Rzeszów, Podkarpackie region (PL)	
15:00 - 15:15	"Senior Tourism in Region of East Macedonia & Thrace", Mr. Pavlos	
	Damianidis, Deputy Regional Governor, Region of East Macedonia & Thrace	
	(GR) (tbc.)	
15:15 - 15:45	Discussion	

2 <sup>nd</sup> session "Product Development for Senior Tourism"		
moderator Assist	. Prof. Elka Dogramadjieva, PhD - Tourism Department, Sofia University (BG)	
14:00 - 14:15	"Windows Cave in Piñar (Granada), a good example of adapted touristic	
	attraction barrier free in rural areas", Mrs. Myriam Prieto, County Council	
	of Granada (ES)	
14:15 - 14:30	"Accessible nature tourism in North Karelia", Mr. Timo Ekroos, ISAK	
	coordinator, Centre for Innovations for Independent Living (ISAK), University	
	of Applied Science, North Karelia (FI)	
14:30 - 14:45	"Untapped Tourism Potential: Putting Age Friendly at the Forefront of Irish	
	Hospitality", Mr. Shane Winters, Age Friendly Planner for the West Region,	
	West Regional Authority (IE)	
14:45 - 15:00	"Tourism consumption of Polish seniors in the light of global tendencies in	
	tourism - the case of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region", Ms. Joanna	
	Zielińska-Szczepkowska, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn,	
	Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic (PL)	
15:00 - 15:15	"SOREA hotels and the State specific subsidy for retired persons in Slovak	
	republic", Mr. Matúš Goč, Project manager, Regional Development Agency	
	of the Prešov Self-Governing Region (SK)	
15:15 - 15:30	"Union of veterans Lukoil Neftohim Burgas – tourism activities for elderly	
	<b>people"</b> , Ms. Radostina Novacheva, Executive Director, Union of veterans	
	Lukoil Neftohim Burgas (BG)	
15:30 - 15:45	Discussion	

# 15:45 - 16:15 Coffee break

# 16:15 - 17:00 Conclusions

16:15 – 16:45	Summary of the Parallel thematic sessions and discussion (by moderators)
16:45 - 17:00	Conclusion by Bourgas Regional Tourist Association





## About the project TOURAGE

The project has grown out from the idea that although Demographic Change brings many challenges it can also bring opportunities to the regions. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the Europe and relatively remote regions have both a lot of unexploited and unknown development potential in this regard. The project seeks to identify good practices on developing tourism possibilities for growing segment of elderly travelers.





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